



CHRIST's Coming, and Chri-
stian Readiness for it.

A
SERMON

Preach'd at

CROXTON,
On Tuesday, Feb. 18. 1717

At the FUNERAL of
Mrs. Cæcilia Davy,

Late Mother of the Rev. Mr. GEORGE and
JOHN DAVY, Ministers of the Gospel.

By FRANCIS FREEMAN, Minister of
the Gospel at Lower-Tooting in Surrey.

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THE
MORNING

MORNING
NOVEMBER 81.



Mr. George Dyer

Member of the Royal Society
of Edinburgh, &c. &c.

The following is a list of the
books which have been received
into the Library of the Royal Society
of Edinburgh, during the month of
November.

FOURTH

Journal of the Royal Society of Edinburgh,
Volume IV, Part I, No. 1, November 1811.

L U K E xii. 40.

*Be ye therefore ready also, for
the Son of Man cometh at
an Hour that ye think not.*

IT was the Desire of the Deceased, whose Remains are now before us, that somewhat might be spoken from these Words upon this Occasion. Tho' formerly she had fix'd on another Scripture, 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8.
I have fought a good Fight, I have finished my Course, I have kept the Faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a Crown of Righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge shall give me at that Day; her Mind herein being much upon the Words that next follow, *and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing;* yet her later Resolution was to have what I have nam'd to you, as such, her Funeral-Text.

Her Choice appears very suitable, for as every Death, and every Funeral speak loudly to us in the Language of the former part of the Words, *Be ye therefore ready also;* what has happen'd to the Person of whose Death or Funeral you have been witness, will in a little time happen to you; they are gone but a little before you, a few Days, Weeks, Months, or Years more, and you must Die as they have done, and go the way that they have gone, for it is the way of all Flesh, therefore *be ye*

ready also : So every such occasion should lead our Reflection to what is signified in the latter part of the Words, as a quickning Motive to our Compliance with the awful Exhortation before given, that our blessed Lord may come and call for us at a Season we don't expect, he may then come and surprise us when we thought he had been more at a distance, or that his coming would have been put farther off. The Time of his coming is always very uncertain, and it may be, and often is very sudden ; and this last is confirm'd to us by Divine Providence in what we have now under our view ; for tho' our deceased Sister the late Mother of your worthy Pastor liv'd to a good old Age, and was for a considerabk time before her Death, under the sensible Weaknesses and Decays of Nature, yet her Change and Removal at last were very sudden.

It might tend to cause the Words of my Text, the awful *Advice* and *Motion* which they contain, to come with more Force and Weight upon us, had I time to consider the remarkable Context in which they are found, and show you how, when our Lord had expos'd the extreme Folly of those who were for amassing and seeking their Satisfaction from the Riches and Plenty of this World, without any proper Regard to their being Rich toward God in Grace and good Works, and, in pursuance of his Advice given them against Covetousness, which usher'd in this Representation, dehort'd his Disciples from an unreasonable immodeate Care about Life, and the Things of it, by a variety of forcible Arguments taken from sundry Topicks. He then

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proposes to them another most reasonable and necessary Case, *viz.*, about their Souls and their Eternal State; that duly attended to, would be sufficient to take up their Thoughts; and urges their Attendance hereto, and Diligence herein, by various most momentous Considerations, which are closed by the Words of my Text; but these Things I must leave to your private Improvement of what you have from v. 15, to 40.

The due Consideration of the Text it self is more than sufficient to take up the Time of this Exercise; in speaking to which I would show you,

I. What's meant here by the *coming of the Son of Man.*

II. What *Readiness* we are to labour for his coming.

III. That what is here signified by our Lord's coming at *an Hour that we think not*, is, and should be improved as a powerful Motive to inspirit our Endeavours after a Readiness for it.

IV. Offer somewhat by way of Application.

I. What is here meant by the *coming of the Son of Man.* There is a five-fold coming of Christ mentioned in Scripture.

1. His coming *in his Gospel Kingdom*, to set up the pure Worship and Ordinances belonging to the Gospel Church, and in the liberal Effusion, and glorious Manifestation of the Holy Spirit, to make Gospel Ministrations and Ordinances effectual to obtain the Design of their Institution. Of this *coming of the Son of Man* is that place meant, Mat. 16.

28. Verily, I say unto you, there be some standing here that shall not taste of Death till they see the Son of Man coming in his Kingdom.

2. His coming by the Grace and Comforts of his Holy Spirit into the Hearts of Men; so Rev. 3. 20. Behold I stand at the Door and knock, if any Man hear my Voice and open to me, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me; Wherein it's graciously promised to Sinners that liv'd under the Gospel Dispensation, that if they hearken'd to the Voice of Christ's Ministers, and entertain'd the Message that he sent by them, he himself would enter into their Hearts by his Holy Spirit, and fill them with his Divine Graces and Comforts (which were before fill'd with the unsatisfactory Trash of this World) and admit them to nearest Union and Communion with him.

3. Sometimes his coming to execute Judgment on the Jewish Nation, for their Contempt of his glorious Person and Gospel-grace, as Mat. 24. 27, 28. For as the Lightning cometh from the East, and shineth unto the West, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be; for where-soever the Carcase is, thither will the Eagles be gather'd together; as the coming of the lightning was sudden and surprising, so would be the coming of Christ, to execute Vengeance on the Jews, for their Impenitency, by the Roman Armies, whose Ensign was the Eagle; You may see it is distinguished from his coming to Judgment, by what immediately follows.

^{1 Cor. vi.} 4. His coming to the last and general Judgment of all Mankind, yea of all the World,

Christian Readiness for it.

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of Men and Angels. So it follows in the Place now refer'd to, immediately after the Tribulation of those Days, shall the Sun be darken'd, and the Moon shall not give her Light, and the Stars shall fall from Heaven, and the Powers of the Heaven shall be shaken; and then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in Heaven; and then shall all the Tribes of the Earth mourn; and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the Clouds of Heaven with Power and great Glory, and he shall send his Angels with a great sound of a Trumpet, and they shall gather the Elect from the four Winds, and from one end of Heaven to the other. The coming of Christ to the general Judgment is here spoken of, jointly with his coming to judge the Jewish Nation, and said to ensue immediately after the Tribulation of those Days, which might well be, considering,

(1.) That this was the greatest Judgment that ever befel any People, and the nearest parallel to the Day of Judgment.

(2.) That it was truly a Day of Judgment to the Jewish Nation, and that the greatest Terror of it proceeded upon the same Account that the greatest Terror of the Day of Judgment will do, namely, from this People's neglecting Christ, and his Gospel, as you may see, comparing *Matt. xxiii. 37.* with *2 Thess. i. 8.* considering,

(3.) That hereupon would immediately follow the greatest Change and the last that would be made upon the State of the Church upon Earth, Carnal Ordinances being abolished, and the unalterable Ordinances of the Gospel taking place; that Kingdom appearing

thus

Heb. xii. that cannot be moved till it will be delivered unto
28. *to God even the Father.* And,
1 Cor. xv. (4.) That the great Day of Judgment
24. would hereupon suddenly follow ; which we
 are to conceive of having in our Eye that
2 Pet. iii. great Saying of the Apostle, *That one Day is
 3. with the Lord as a thousand Years, and a thousand
 Years as one Day.*

'Tis with regard to this, and the foregoing Reason, we so oft have it signified in Scripture, that the Times from our Saviour's appearing and establishing a Gospel Church and Worship, to his coming again to Judgment, are the *Last Days*.

S: By the Lord's coming is meant, his coming to particular Persons by Death. So *Luke xix. 13.* when the Lord had given to his Servants their several Talents, he bids them *occupy till he come*; tho' if we apply this to the successive Ages and Generations of Men, it may be reduc'd to the former Signification ; yet the most ready, next and immediate Meaning of the Words, seems to be that whereby they are referr'd to Christ's particular coming to every Man by Death. There is no occupying for any beyond Death ; no trading with any talents we have here given us to trade with beyond the Grave ; the account of the Talents we have had giv'n us for Improvement will then commence ; we must then give an account of our Stewardship, as those that must be no longer Stewards, and have our Eternal State determined according to our Improvement, or Non-improvement, or Mis-improvement of them (as certainly as we shall have at the great and general Day of Judgment, when the solemn Process

Process of such a time will be declared and ratified before Angels and all Generations of Men, in that great and general Assembly that will then be.) And this I take to be the particular Meaning of the Words in this Place, tho' what was now mention'd is not to be excluded our Consideration: We are to be always Watching and always ready for the Day of Death, and of our particular Judgment, and for the general Judgment-Day; that as they are both of them, as to the Time thereof, uncertain to all Men, and may be expected to come upon Mankind by Surprize, neither one nor the other of them, may be such a Surprise upon us, as they will be upon the careless World: This of the First.

II. What *Readiness* are we to labour for the coming of the Son of Man?

There is a two-fold *Readiness*: We are to be endeavouring this way an *Habitual* and an *Actual Readiness*.

The Distinction is certainly proper and necessary here to be attended to, betwixt *Habitual* and *Actual Readiness* for the Lord's coming; but to refer in our Thoughts and Expressions, what relates to each, to its proper Class, must be acknowledg'd to have its difficulty:

As the *Habitual Readiness* lies in our Sanctification, or the Implantation of the Graces of the Holy Spirit in us; whereby our State is render'd good before God, and our Condition safe: So the *Actual Readiness* consists in that gracious Temper and Exercise, that will be, in an especial manner, signifying of our Preparedness for our Lord's coming, and will

render the Thoughts and Approach of Death more agreeable and comfortable to us. But as it's only the Exercise that can discover the in-being of Grace, and proper Effects thereof will be (where God gives Life and Time) visibly discovering our Sanctification or Habitual Preparation; so, if when I would represent in the most particular and plainest Manner, and to the meanest Capacities, a Matter of such general and vast Importance, the niceness of Distinction should seem not to be so strictly observ'd in Things betwixt which there is so near a Relation and Connexion, the candid Christian will easily excuse it.

i. There's an *Habitual Readiness* for Christ's Coming, when those Things take Place in the Soul, and are express'd in the Life, that do evidently declare a Man's State to be good. This consists of, and is discover'd by such Things as these:

(i.) True Repentance for all Sin. The Guilt of Sin lying upon the Soul, is enough to make the Thoughts of Christ's coming terrible. An impenitent Sinner can have no comfortable Meeting with a *Holy Jesus*, who died to save Souls from Sin, and will certainly condemn those that are found in it at his coming. If we would not have our guilty Souls, when they turn inward, reflect upon themselves, and entertain the Thoughts of our Day of Death and Reckoning, I say, if we would not have them, on such occasion, anticipating the Terror of that dreadful Doom of the Judge of all the Earth, *Go ye cursed into everlasting Fire prepared for the Devil and his Angels.* We must have a

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Care of Living in Impenitence for any known Sin : Never say it is a little one ; if it be Sin, away with it, rid your selves of it, be humbled for it presently. The least Sin is sufficient to make the Thoughts of Death and Judgment at the greatest distance, but much more in the nearer Approaches most terrible and dreadful.

The Soul that's fit for Death, has seen something of the dreadful Hue, and felt something of the dreadful Horror of Sin, that makes him diligently avoid it, and as diligently humble himself upon all Occasions of its Appearance in him ; and if ever you would be habitually prepared for the coming of your Lord, so as that whenever he shall call for you by Death, Death shall be welcome, your State shall be safe in it, you must endeavour a true sight of the odious Nature of Sin ; you must see it as the greatest of Evils, and be deeply humbled for whatever of that Nature appears in you before God.

The Soul that is habitually prepar'd for Death, has taken a Penitential View, yea, frequent Penitential Views of the Sin of its Nature and the Sins of its Life. Such a one has been, and is daily humbled for Sin, upon those great Accounts particularly that do most especially tend to move an ingenuous Sorrow, as it separates betwixt God and the Soul, as it's opposite to Divine Goodness, the many Mercies bestow'd upon him, and especially, the singular Mercy and Grace of God in Christ Jesus, as it is of a defiling, and not only of a damning Nature. True and ingenuous Repentance, and sincere and deep Humiliation for the Sins of

our *Nature and Lives*, is an Essential Requisite of a Soul's *Habitual Readiness* for Christ's Coming.

(2.) Careful *Abstinence from every known Sin*, is another Requisite of our *Habitual Readiness* for our Lord's coming. This is consequent upon the former, the Soul has not truly repented of Sin that does not carefully abstain from it: *The burnt Child*, we say, *dreads the Fire*; the Person that has once felt the pungent Convictions of the Spirit for Sin, and submitted himself to them in a due manner, will certainly be tender of offending.

Carefulness of offending is put down by the ^{2 Cor, vii.} Apostle as the first *Mark of sorrowing after a godly sort*; and 'tis strange how they can satisfy themselves about their Repentance, or rather flatter and delude themselves with the Thoughts of any such Thing, that don't find this *Mark* appearing in them. Hopes that are thus built, how often do they prove delusive upon the Arrest of any small Distemper or Disorder; but how certainly will they, at the coming of the Judge, prove *as the giving up of the Ghost*, and leave the guilty Sinner without any Comfort or Support?

There's nothing does so sensibly strike the Soul upon any Alarm of God's Providence, as the *Conscience of wilful Sins*; these are often found more intolerable than Diseases or Sickness, outward Crosses or Losses, that cause miserable Complaints in those that suffer under them. But with what horrid Blackness do they cloath the Thoughts and Expectations of the Lord's coming, who has declared, That *the Servant that knew his Master's Will and prepared*

pared not himself, nor did accordingly, shall be beaten with many stripes? Luke xii. 47. If this be the just Expectation of such, how much more terrible may theirs be upon this Account, that when they knew it, acted willingly, in direct contrariety thereto? As many *wilful Sins* as a Man has to reflect upon, they will be as so many *Loads upon his Breast*, under the Thoughts and Expectation of the Lord's coming, that will tend to oppress his Vitals, and contract his Hopes:

As all wilful Sin must then be carefully avoided as a necessary Requisite to our *Habitual Preparation* for our Lord's coming; so must we especially watch against those that our Lord has particularly threaten'd his Vengeance against in that Day; such as *Drunkenness and smiting our Brethren*, Luke xii. 45. *If that Servant say in his Heart, my Lord delayeth his coming, and shall begin to beat the Men-Servants and Maidens, and to eat and drink with the Drunken; the Lord of that Servant will come in a Day that he looketh not for him, and in an Hour that he is not ware of, and will cut him asunder, and appoint him his Portion with Unbelievers.* So all *Cruelty, Oppression, rigid exacting upon our Brethren beyond their Ability*, Matth. xviii. 33, 34. when he took hold of his Fellow-Servant for a *Hundred Pence* that ow'd his Lord *Ten Thousand Talents*, the Lord of that Servant, it's said, was wroth with him, and delivered him to the *Tormentors*, till he should pay all that was due to him.

It's most certain that we cannot live without Sin; and no less certain, that we cannot live entirely free from wilful Sin; but if we would

would be Habitually prepared for the Lord's coming, we must, in the use of all proper Means of his Appointment, be exercising ourselves in a diligent Care this way.

(3.) *A true Faith in our Lord Jesus Christ* is another essential Requisite of our *Habitual Preparation* for his coming. The great Awards of another Life, will be govern'd according to the being or not ~~being~~ of this Grace in us. He that has here declared and given it as the Sum of *Mark xvi.* the Gospel, That *he that believes and is baptized, shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned,* will hereafter ratify and confirm that saying, and the eternal State of the Adult that liv'd under the Gospel, will certainly be determined according thereto; so that we shall never be able to meet Christ as *Judge*, if we did not here receive and build upon him as our *Saviour*, and take him as our *Lord and Ruler*, as well as our *Prophet and Teacher*. Dreadful will be the Voice of Christ to those that would not here receive him as he was offered in that Day, But those mine *Enemies that would not I should reign over them, bring bither and slay them before me:* Therefore, if ever we would be Habitually prepared for Death and Judgment, we must build upon Christ by Faith for *Life and Righteousness*, we must accept of him as he is pleased to offer himself to our Acceptance and Dependence, and must be sure to glorify God and do his Will, by *believing on him whom he has sent, i John iii. 23.* We must be earnestly seeking, if we have it not, that *Faith that is of the Operation of God*, in all the ways of his Appointment, especially hearing the Word, for *Faith comes by hearing.*

Faith is the *end of the Law and Gospel*; the end of all the Precepts and Threatnings of the Law, and of all those gracious Promises of the Gospel, are to bring us to Faith; in having this, we *have All*, and without it we *have Nothing*, whatever our Opinion of our selves or others Esteem of us may be. We have no Legal Righteousness, wherein to stand before the Judge of all the Earth; and if we have not Christ's Righteousness apprehended by Faith to plead for our Justification at his coming, how terrible will that be to our Souls?

(4.) *Love to God and our Lord Jesus Christ*, is another essential Qualification of our *Habitual Preparation* for our Lord's coming. The Scripture speaks of the Love of our Lord, as that which will tend to make the Thoughts of his coming grateful and agreeable, and to antedate to Holy Souls, the Joys of his Appearance by the blessed Prelibrations it gives there of anticipating the glorious Sight, 1 Pet. i. 8. *Whom having not seen ye love; in whom, tho' now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice, with Joy unspeakable and full of Glory:* And contrarily, the not loving our Lord Jesus Christ, has a dreadful Curse assign'd to it, *He that loveth not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha*, accursed till the coming of our blessed Saviour, and sure he cannot be blessed *then*; no, the Curse will then fall upon him in its dreadful Weight, and be fully executed at the fearful Appearance of our Lord, to which he is so separated.

(5.) *Charity with all Men* is another Essential Requisite of our *Habitual Preparation* and Readiness for our Lord's coming. He assures us,

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whose coming we are to expect and be ready for, that without such a Charity maintain'd, we are not fit to have any thing to do with God in Prayer, or any other holy Duties, wherein we are constantly to acknowledge and wait upon him in this World; that therefore when we come to lay our Gift upon the Altar, and there remember any private Difference betwixt us and our Neighbour, we are leaving our Gift there, first to seek Reconciliation,

Matth. v. 13, 24. and then to come and offer it, if we

would offer it with God's Acceptance, and to our own Advantage; and if we are in any private Duties or religious Exercises, unfit to converse with the Holy God, while we want that Charity that's due from us to our Neighbour, it follows, by Parity of Reason, that we must be much more unfit to appear before God in such a solemn Manner, and upon so great an Account as we are to do upon our leaving this World, if we are not in Charity with all Mankind, for if we forgive not from our Hearts their Trespasses to our Fellow-Creatures, our Heavenly Father will not forgive us, as our Lord hath sufficiently testified.

Matth. vi. 13.

(6.) *A faithful Submission, in a constant Course, to the sanctifying Operations of the Holy Spirit.* It was the Apostles Prayer for the Thessalonians, *1 Epist. v. 23.* And the very God of Peace sanctify you wholly, and I pray God, your whole Spirit, Soul, and Body, be presented blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. If ever we would have a joyful Meeting with our blessed Lord at his coming, we must heartily turn from all Sin to God, and labour entirely to submit our selves to the sanctifying Operations

of

of the holy Spirit, which our Lord has purposely sent forth that it might by its sanctifying Influences convey'd to every Part and Power, preserve the whole Man blameless to his coming. We must thus yield our selves to the Lord, *nor grieving the Spirit*, nor daring to check or counter-work its holy Motions, but submitting our selves intirely to its gracious Dealings with us, that by its Influences we may be animated and enlarged in an holy Course, edified in our most holy Faith, and sealed to the Day of Redemption. We must be daily seeking and imploring its blessed Aids, and improving its gracious Assurances for the enabling us to mortify Corruptions, to resist Temptations, to do the Will of God, and to make Improvements in Grace, Holiness and Comfort unto complete Salvation.

(7.) *A faithful persevering Improvement of our Time and Talents in God's Service*, is another Requisite of our habitual Preparation for our Lord's coming. That we be doing Good in our Places, *in some Proportion* to the Circumstances we are in and the Advantages we have to make use of for God's Glory, and our own and others Good. All that live in the World have some Talents, more or less, put into their Hands for Improvement. *Life, Health, Strength, worldly Goods, mental Endowments; our Relation to others, the Power we have over others, the Interest we have in them, the Reputation we have in the World;* these are improvable Talents, that the Sovereign Ruler of the World, and Disposer of all Good, hath intrusted us with, that we might employ them for the Service of his Interest; and he that has by these qualify'd us for Ser-

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vice, requires our Improvement of the Favours he bestows upon us, according to the Advantages we have ; he requires we should be trading with his Talents, and doing good in our Places according to our Opportunities.

We read that the great Lord dispenses his *Talents to his Servants, To every one according to his Ability* ; and we find afterwards, that the good Servants Improvements were according to the Talents they had received ; he that had receiv'd ten Talents gain'd other ten ; and he that had but two increas'd them to two more. Our faithful Attendance to the Talents we have receiv'd, to the Advantages and Blessings committed by divine Providence to our Improvement, and our concerned Improvement of our several Abilities, Opportunities, and Interests for the doing God Service, is a necessary Requisite of our habitual Preparation for our Lord's coming.

'Tis but an uncomfortable Meeting we can expect to have with our blessed Lord, when he shall come and call for us out of this World, if we have been ordinarily mis-spending and misapplying, if we have been neglecting or abusing, and squandering away the Talents he hath given us for Improvement. If ever we would hope to have our Lord's coming comfortable to us, we must, with the Talents he has be-

Luke xix. stowed upon us, occupy till he come : We must 13. study to be doing good in our Places, and be ready to improve our Seasons and Advantages for that purpose ; study relative as well as real Holiness ; labour to be good in our Families and Places, and as diffusively as we may in the Galvi.10. World : As we have Opportunity, doing good to all, but

but especially to those that are of the Household of Faith ; and by patient Continuance in Well-doing, against all Opposition from within, and from without, seeking for Glory, Honour, and Immortality, unto the actual Attainment of Everlasting Life ; and blessed are those Servants whom the Lord when he cometh shall find so doing ; for to these God hath by Promise secured the *Rom. ii. 6, 7.* Glory they are seeking for.

I have thus spoken to the habitual Preparation of Souls for our Lord's coming. There is besides this,

2. An actual Preparation for it, a *readiness of Frame*, as well as of *State*, that we are all of us to be labouring after, and which then appears,

(1.) When a Soul has attained to a Victory over, and weanedness from the World and present Things ; when it is not so much weary of the World on Account of Troubles, Crosses, Disappointments, &c. as weaned from it upon the believing Apprehension, and inward Sense of the real Vanity of these earthly Things, and of the Worth and Excellency of those great and satisfying Realities that lye beyond Time. Many are weary of this World, that are very unfit for another, they are worn out, it may be, with Age, afflicted with continual Weakness and Infirmities, meet with disappointed Expectations, and may thus be wearied and tired out with the Troubles of Life. This may argue either Stupidity or Weakness, as it falls out, and is not the Thing that I speak of. But for Persons upon a true apprehension of the Vanity, Transitoriness, and Unsatisfactoriness of present Enjoyments, and a firm Belief, and

real Experience of the superior Value of spiritual and eternal Things, to be at a point with the World and all that it contains; to be wean'd from its Pleasures, Profits, Honours and Enjoyments, this is a blessed Attainment, and shows the happy Preparation of those Souls in whom it takes Place for that better World, *Heb. 11. 13.* *These all died in the Faith, not having received the Promises, but having seen them afar off, and were perswaded of them, and embrac'd them, and confessed that they were Strangers and Pilgrims on the Earth;* and, says he, *those that say these Things, plainly declare that they seek a Country.* Ver. 14. *And they desire a better Country, that is an heavenly, wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he hath provided for them a City,* ver. 16. Where the Mind is truly and savingly enlightened, to look upon temporal and eternal Things as they really are, and to give, as their stated Judgment, the Preference where it is due; where the Soul is wrought to an *holy Indifference* as to present Things, and a *prevailing Desire* after those that are better, it shows that better Things are provided for such, and that by the Grace of God they are in a good Measure prepared for them.

(2.) When a Soul has the inward Testimony, and lively, comfortable Exercise of gracious Habits; when the Spirit witnesses with our Spirits that we are the Children of God: When accordingly we can apply to God as our God and Father, and converse with him freely and comfortably in Ordinances from time to time. When the Soul can see his Out-goings in the Sanctuary, and is bless'd with gracious Manifestations of divine, special, and distinguishing Mercy in the

the Use of Ordinances, whether publick or private. When the Sun of Righteousness shines upon the Tabernacle of the Soul, and God is pleas'd freely to communicate himself in a way of special Favour.

When it is the Blessing and Happiness of Souls to be enlarg'd from God, and for him, that they are *willing to spend and to be spent* for his Service, to lay out themselves for his Name and Honour, and are *zealous for his Truth* (as these commonly go together; and where this latter is not, there's great Reason to question the former) where it is so with any, there's much of *actual Preparation* for the Lord's coming.

(3.) When Persons are *enabled to improve, rely upon, and take the Comfort of the Covenant*. When they can, by the assisting Aids of the Holy Ghost, look with Comfort to the great Mediator of the Covenant betwixt God and Man, as their Sponsor and Surety, take a somewhat particular and comforting View of the great Purchase of the Redeemer, and of the unspeakable Blessings of his Purchase which the Covenant conveys and assures to believing Souls, as apprehending their own particular Interest in these great Things, and trusting in the Mercy of God, and Merits of the Redeemer for their full Enjoyment when they shall leave this World.

(4.) When hereupon the Soul is *willing to leave this World*, can say, as Simeon, if God should give it a present dismiss, *Lord, now lettest thou Luke ii.
thy Servant depart in peace, for mine Eyes have seen thy Salvation.* It is absolutely resign'd to the Will of God, and easy in its own Breast, whe-

whether it shall be continued in this World a Year, Week, Day, Hour, Moment longer, knowing that all shall be well with it, and that whether in Life or Death Christ shall be gain to it.

(5.) When tho' it is submissive to the Will of God, it's desirous rather to depart and to be with Christ, it has, upon solid Grounds, a settled Peace, no Fear or Apprehension within it self, any further than what is natural, and flows from its constant Converse with sensible Objects, a natural averseness to Dissolution of the natural Frame and Union betwixt Soul and Body, and the present invisibility of those Things that are the Matter of Faith.

Phil. i. 23, 24. When the only prevailing Desire that the Soul has of continuing here is, that it may be capable of that farther Service to God, and his Interest in the World, which it cannot in this kind yield in another, and which may there abound to its good Account. This was the Temper of the holy Apostle: *I am in a Strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better: Nevertheless to abide in the Flesh is more needful for you.*

Ifa. xxxviii. 1. (6.) When the outward Affairs, as well as the inward Man, are prepar'd and dispos'd for such a Change. When as God directed Hezekiah, the House is set in Order, and worldly Affairs so dispos'd of, that the Soul, that is otherwise ready, has nothing of these worldly Things to embroil its Thoughts, but all Things in a readiness for its Translation hence.

This Manner of actual Preparation we are to be all of us labouring for, tho' it must be acknowledg'd

ledg'd that there may be a true actual Preparedness for Death and Eternity that may be short of this. And that I may not be wanting to the Peace of any sincere Soul, I shall, in one Particular, lay before you what I look upon as the least and lowest Degree thereof, and that I take to be,

(7.) When in the *true Exercise of the Graces of God's Spirit, and faithful Employment of its Time and Talents in God's Service*, the Soul is *waiting for, and expecting its Lord's coming*. This is the least and lowest Degree of a Soul's Preparedness that Way. That it be attending to those Advantages God hath put into its Hand for Improvement, exercising it self unto Godliness in the Duties of its general and particular Calling, diligently laying out it self in God's Service, exercising the Graces of the Holy Spirit (as Occasion is giv'n those that are to be occasionally exercised, and stately such as are of constant Exercise) in this Way waiting for its Lord's coming. And this I ground on ver. 35, &c. of the Chapter of my Text, *Let your Loins be girded about, and your Light burning, and ye your selves like unto Men that wait for your Lord, when he will return from the Wedding, that when he cometh and knocketh you may open to him immediately: Blessed are those Servants whom the Lord when he cometh shall find watching. Verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them sit down to Meat, and will come forth and serve them. And if he should come in the second Watch, or come in the third Watch, and find you so, blessed are those Servants. And this know, that if the good Man of the House had known what Hour the Thief should come, he would have*

have watched, and not suffered his House to be broken through. When Persons are thus girding up the Loyns of their Souls, using a serious and industrious Diligence in God's Service, faithfully attending to the Duty of their Places, and exercising and cultivating the Graces of the Spirit that are in them to this purpose, then are they in some Measure prepar'd, and in *actual* Readiness for the Lord's coming.

And I hope I need but mention it to you, that in this Exercise is *included* their faithful Abstinence from every known Sin, and whatever else has been signified as belonging to the habitual Readiness of Souls for the Lord's coming; as true Repentance for Sin, Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, Love to God, Charity towards all Men, and a true Submission to the Guidance, and sanctifying Operations of the Holy Spirit.

But tho' I should be glad if Things were come to this pass with all that hear me, let me, my Brethren, earnestly exhort and beseech you not to rest in, or content your selves with the lowest Attainments as to actual Preparedness for the Lord's coming, but to remember, and be govern'd by that Precept of the holy Apostle, which you have, 2 Pet. 1. 5, &c. That giving all Diligence, you add to your Faith Virtue, and to Virtue Knowledge, and to Knowledge Temperance, and to Temperance Patience, and to Patience Godliness, and to Godliness brotherly Kindness, and to brotherly Kindness Charity, that so an abundant Entrance may be ministered unto them into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Thus of the second General, which, as the Case requir'd,

having



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